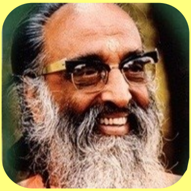
Patrika

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles

APRIL 2015



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CHINMAYA MISSION
LOS ANGELES
Vedanta, Wisdom, Spiritual Growth

Chinmaya Rameshwaram

Upcoming Events

Global Launch of Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations	May 6-8	
Valmiki Ramayana by Swami Ishwarananda	May 4-8	6:30 am - 7:30 am 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Kalanjali Event: Gundecha Brothers	May 9	7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
Mother's Day Celebration *Details available on website*	May 10	
CHYK Class: Break the Bondage by Swami Ishwarananda	May 13	7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
On A Quest **a biopic on Pujya Gurudev** *Screenings in Arcadia & Gardena*	May 17	10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Stotradhaara Testing	May 30	8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Bhagavad Gita Discourse Series by Swami Ishwarananda	Every Sunday	9:00 am - 10:15 am 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm
Fundamentals of Vedanta Lectures by Acharya Mahadevan	Every Sunday	9:00 am - 10:15 am 12:00 pm - 1:15 pm
Guided Vedic Chanting by Swami Ishwarananda	Every Saturday	6:30 am - 7:30 am
****Registration Closes May 15**** Memorial Day CHYK Retreat In The Woods Of Contemplation	May 22-25	
****Save the Date**** Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji's Gita Jnana Yagna: Chapter 4	Jun 28-Jul 4	

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Thus Spake The Master

Do not run away. Face the world and get hit by the world. Let the world drop you again and again. It is the means to destroy the ego.

- Swami Chinmayananda

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Words Of The Wise

Learn to want and like what you get.

14451 Franklin Ave
Tustin, CA 92780-7012
USA
losangeles@chinmayamission.org

Over Thirty Years Of Service To Humanity

- Swami Tejomayananda

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THINK!

Let Us Meet...

What you think you are is not what you are
What others think you are is also not what you are
Who you are is who I am, everyone is
So, don't think about what you are,
Think about who you are…
You will meet everyone….in you!

- Swami Ishwarananda

for e-Satsang blog, click here

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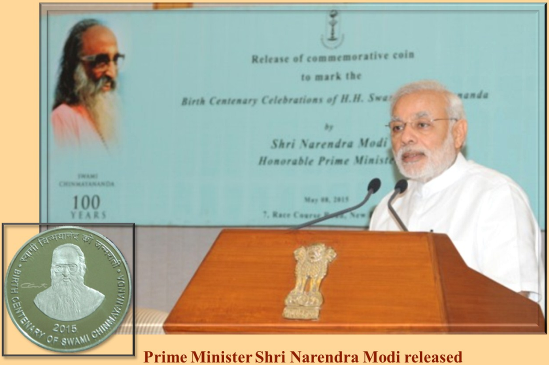
PM Releases Swami Chinmayananda Centenary Coin

FOR THE RECORD


Release of commemorative coin
to mark the
Birth Centenary Celebrations of H.H. Swa nanda
by
Shri Narendra Modi
Honorable Prime Ministe
May 08, 2015
7, Race Course R New
SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA
100 YEARS
स्वामी चिन्मयानंद की जन्मशती
BIRTH CENTENARY OF SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA
2015

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin on May 8th 2015 to mark the Birth Centenary of Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda

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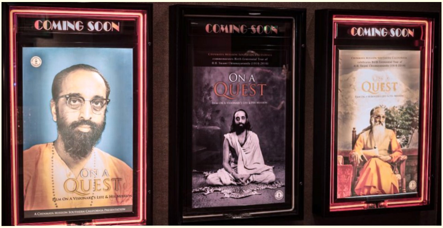
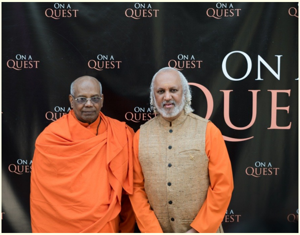
Gurudev's Biopic Moves and Touches Viewers in L.A.

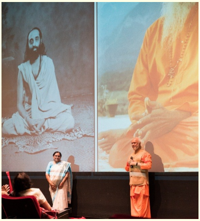
The Laguna Hills Mall Cinema was abuzz on Apr.11 morning. Special invitees of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles gathering for the premiere of the much-awaited 'On A Quest' – a movie on the life of the master, Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji.



The screening got support from several like-minded organizations with members from the Brea Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Vedanta Society, BAPS, Ekal Vidyalaya and SSY and academicians in attendance. Long time members of CMLA were seen in the lobby greeting each other with anticipation and eagerness to the life of their guru unfold onscreen. The lobby itself was filled with kurtas, saris and churidar clad members and the hallway bore posters of the movie with the image of Pujya Gurudev looking on!



In the inaugural program that preceded the screening of the movie, prayers were offered at the altar of Gurudev which had been lovingly set up by dedicated volunteers. The auditorium reverberated with auspicious chants as the audience joined in with the Chinmayanjali group for singing praise of the Guru. Shobha and Ashok Naimpally, who had hosted Gurudev at their home on his first visit to Southern California, lit the electric lamps at the altar with the click of a remote button. Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya Mahadevanji acquainted the audience with Gurudev's life and CMLA Board President, Dr. D.V.Pillai summed it by saying Gurudev was one of the "best sons that India had produced". Long time member Mukta Patel was invited to officially inaugurate the screening of the film. And what a film it was!



The two-hour movie detailed the journey of a young Balakrishna Menon from an atheist to a spiritual master. The movie shifted focus at a fast pace unfolding different facets of the life of young Menon from curious child to fiery student, union leader to a thinking journalist who believes that "India is free, but, not Indians." An early atheist, he set off to Rishikesh to meet the orange clad seekers saying, "Religion is the opium of the masses- I'm going to expose those drug-peddlers."

His meeting with the great master Swami Sivananda, and receiving the answer to his question, "Why is there so much evil and injustice around? If this is the best that God can do; then I'm not impressed," set the tone of the changes he is about to embark on deepening his quest in a different direction.

The movie was filled with credible punch lines and despite the fast changing pace retained continuity in narrative. Siddhartha Nuni, the cinematographer who has worked on movies as 'Life of Pi' and 'Lucia' with his masterful picturesque strokes of Sidhabari and pre-freedom Lucknow debunked the thinking that biopics are boring. Director R.S Prasanna's casting of actors of the young and old Swami Chinmayananda was brilliant allowing the audience to forget that it was a story that was being retold and not the spiritual leader himself.

The movie concluded with Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji advising a seeker, "Start walking and the path will appear." One of the more moving moments was his answer to the question "How do feel walking in His (Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's) shoes?" Smiling with a humility that brought tears and shame at all that we take pride in, Guruji responds, "I am not in His shoes, I am at His feet."

The audience came out deeply touched. Several were moved to tears. Others were stunned into silence and even more appreciative of what Gurudev has given to humankind. Many were simply left with a quest to know more.

Swami Ishwarananda's quip said it all, "See this movie not as entertainment but, enlightenment," he said.

Since the premiere, the movie has already been screened six times in Orange County cities of

Anaheim, Laguna Hills and Brea to a cumulative audience of 1300+ people.

The next screenings are scheduled to be held in the Los Angeles County cities of Gardena and Arcadia on May 17th.

Click here for details of venue, timings and ticket purchase options for upcoming shows.

For the official movie trailer, click here.

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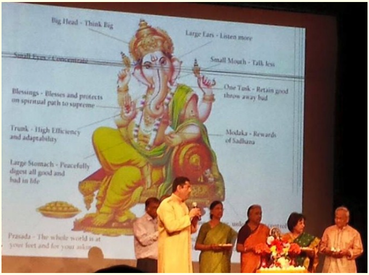
India's Spectacular Diversity is Showcased at Rameshwaram's Annual Fest

The evening of April 18 marked yet another year of a brilliant cultural showcase put together by the Chinmaya families. 'India Fest' was a uniquely integrated program featuring groups representing different states in performances ranging from cultural dances and live music to colorful skits and acts – each in worship of regional and universal deities.

The evening started with the "Vishu" puja in honor of the New Year celebrated in several states of India with much fanfare and vigor creating a beautiful ambiance, which carried through the rest of the evening. Swami Ishwarananda welcomed the families to this special celebration and recognized the selfless volunteers of CMLA.

The cultural segment enthusiastically organized by Chinmaya families representing seven states in India was enjoyed by all. From Team Maharashtra's Lokmanya Tilak narrating Ganesh Chaturthi to Team Tamil Nadu's beautifully decorated palki and folk dances in honor of Lord Muruga; from Team Karnataka's superbly enacted skit honoring Goddess Sharadamba in Shringeri to Team North India's wonderfully and tightly scripted act on the life of Lord Rama; from Team Telugu's beautifully choreographed dance in honor of Lord Balaji to Team Gujarat's colorful and foot tapping garba-raas performance in poetic praise of Bal Krishna and concluding with the grand depiction of Lord Ayappa's abode atop Sabrimala, the evening was one of color, music, talent and joy.


Big Head - Think Big
Large Ears - Listen more
Small Eyes - Concentrate
Small Mouth - Talk less
One Tusk - Retain good throw away bad
Blessings - Blesses and protects on spiritual path to supreme
Trunk - High Efficiency and adaptability
Modaka - Rewards of Sadhana
Large Stomach - Peacefully digest all good and bad in life
Prasada - The whole world is at your feet and for your asking

The program came to its end with all the teams coming together onstage to the famous song “Mile sur mera tumhara toh sur bane hamara” symbolizing the diversity that exists within our culture making us uniquely Indian.

All the participants put their best foot forward in presenting a brilliant cultural program in front of a robust audience of 550 people.

And just as the diversity was showcased through performances on stage, the dinner that followed was also rich in variety. Food from the seven different states of India was represented. Most of the food was cooked at home by volunteers. With such variety, people happily struggled to choose the dish that they wanted to eat! Even the most health conscious found it hard to resist such delectable finger-licking food.

The event, which is getting larger in scope and size with each succeeding year, was enjoyed thoroughly by all.

TOP

Our Golden Swamiji!

All the learned lectures, strong leadership and of course the white hair might have had you fooled. But the truth is out - our young Swamiji, turned 50 only this month!

And CMLA was ready to celebrate the marquee year.

On April 26, several hundred people gathered at Rameshwaram to join in in an evening that exhibited the respect that CMLA members have for Swami Ishwarananda. Several groups that volunteer and learn at his behest were on hand with little onstage offerings.

It began with the purnakhumbham done by Acharya Mahadevji and Vijiji for Swamiji along with chanting by the Shlokanjali group. What followed was one delightful item after another. There was Mahadevji himself, in a hark back to his own early days, singing a pop song in praise and in English!

Chinmayanjali students had a hilarious enactment of a Guru and his students bumbling through lessons in Sanskrit and Vedanta. Swaranjali had everyone laughing with their birthday song which pointed out the unique quirks and facets of Swamiji. The CMLA board of directors too came together to mull publicly what gift they should give the birthday boy. Each member mouthed a line that was indicative of what might have transpired in a meeting, if it were to actually happen! On behalf of the volunteers at CMLA, a large birthday card was handed over to him. A nice a/v presentation showed Swamiji from his early days in California – at Kasi, Mithila – and more recent activities.

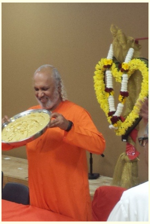
HAPPY BIRTHDAY SWAMIJI

The highlight of the evening was a wonderful exposition with visuals on Swamiji's life as a school boy, as a youth and his early interactions with Gurudev and his initiation as a monk. More details were give in a Q&A session with his family, including Swamiji's mother, brother, sister in law and niece.

To the strains of 'Janma Dinam' Swamiji was garlanded and requested to cut an egg free cake. Swamiji spoke with some emotion after all the love that was showered on him. The event concluded with dinner for all.

50
Happy
GOLDEN
Janamdinam

Earlier in the day, the tiny tots of CEEP surprised Swamiji with spontaneous singing of birthday song in the Rameshwaram hallway. Swamiji handed a balloon and candy to each child. The next evening, the actual birthday of Swamiji, was celebrated by the puja group with a special Monday Rudra Abhishekam and yet another special badam halwa birthday cake!



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Reflections On Guruji

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda will visit Chinmaya Rameshwaram from June 28-July 4, this year. As CMLA readies in excitement to welcome him and eagerly wait to hear him speak on "Foster your Freedom" based on the Bhagavad Gita, ***Patrika*** *brings to you the reflections of a few members who have had the blessed opportunity to have spent time in his presence and to have learned at his feet.*

Rashmi and Sarv Singh

Rashmi: I first met Guruji at the camp in Flint, MI after he had just landed from Mumbai, jetlagged and without luggage that had been lost in transit. He sat in the front row listening with devotion to Gurudev. He was so young. Little did I know that this young cub would rise like a lion, expanding the mission and the vision of our Pujya Gurudev ,all over the world with lightning speed. Thus silently teaching us how a one pointed devotion to our guru and his ideal can also help in our own Sadhana and spiritual goal to liberation from suffering. A true Vedanta Simha! A bhakta, karmyogi and jnani for all of us to dip in and progress on our spiritual journey.

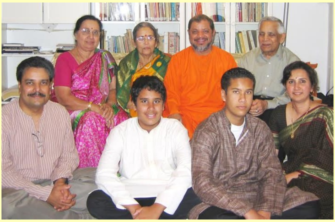
Guruji is an ocean of compassion. I went to see him in Chicago in 1995. I begged him to guide me as a guru, I was going through difficult times. Humbly, he told me, "you have pujya gurudev's grace, I am not your guru, but your brother." Till today, he truly has been a brother to me, helping, guiding, supporting and correcting me gently. This is his way of teaching humility, Oneness and love for all, as we are members of the same Chinmaya family, and should expand to universal brotherhood of fundamental teachings as ALL ARE ONE.

When my husband had his heart transplant, he took time from his very busy schedule to fly down to L.A. in a private plane to come to our home to see my husband and again in 2001 to stay with us for two days. He cancelled all his meetings and discourses in L.A. and stayed with us like a family member, guiding and supporting us through this difficult time. He told me that my liberation is through serving my husband. Serve with compassion, he said, without demanding anything in return. He told me to do my duty and leave the rest. I had to be patient, brave and face situations with the courage of a Vedantin, the tender heart of a bhakta and serve as a karma yogi.

Ever since then, I have taken it as my sadhana to be more patient and show the same kind of compassion and caring to my medical patients, as Guruji showed us in our time of need.

I have no words to express my gratitude to him, only way I can is to follow his path of compassion, love and forgiveness.

Susheel and Raj Mantha



Susheel: We joined Chinmaya Mission in 1991 and met Gurudev and Guruji the following year. I was touched by Guruji's humility, simplicity and his absolute devotion to Gurudev. While all attention was showered on Gurudev during satsangs, Guruji would quietly sit in the audience like any other devotee but always alert and tuned in to Gurudev's needs and commands. Later, during his week-long visit to I attended morning and evening sessions and even visited him in between with every excuse I could get. He showed me how to make his signature khichdi; the trick was to close your eyes when pouring ghee at the end!

In the mid-1990s, Guruji was scheduled to give discourses on the Ramayana in Cerritos Park. In my role as publicist for CMLA, I had to ensure the word was spread to the community. I worked zealously for several months, but one week before the lecture, an advertisement in an Indian newspaper went terribly wrong: Gurudev's Mahasamadhi anniversary announcement had Guruji's picture! It was a half-page ad that was hard to miss. I was in total shock as I had approved the proof. Calls started pouring in from concerned devotees. The newspaper immediately announced the correction but I remained a nervous wreck. How was I going to face Guruji? I kept a low profile through the week and on the last day at a bhiksha, I meekly apologized to him. He lovingly looked at me and said, "Don't worry Susheel, you have only prolonged my life through this mistake." I had tears of relief and gratitude.

I once expressed to him that a sadhak's spiritual progress is not entirely proportional to his or her efforts, that God's grace is necessary, over which we have no control. He reprimanded in his unique style, "Stop constantly seeking God's grace, start seeing God's grace." This has stuck with me and helps me focus on the positive and feel content and grateful for what I am blessed with.

Raj: Guruji's advise to me has always been very practical and simple enough for me to apply. I was at a San Diego yagna and during the bhiksha that followed, Guruji advised me to bring maximum number of people at the lowest possible cost to the 2010 Mahasamadhi camp that CMLA was going to host. That advise set the tone for a highly successful camp. We were able to draw 750 people to the camp which was the lowest priced at the time.

On another occasion at the Mithila inauguration, I wanted to know how to introduce him since there was so much information around on him. He advised me to state what comes to my mind and not talk about what people can read on the internet. I sat alone very late night and wrote a few points that came to my mind. Again a very simple yet concrete advise.

Guruji's compositions and music have always touched me. I listen to his bhajans as a support during my meditation.

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CMLA Resounds with the Chants of the Geeta During Contest

This year's Bhagavad Geeta chanting competition was very special as it was part of the international competition to commemorate the birth centenary celebrations of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. The last such one was held in 2001, to mark the golden jubilee of Chinmaya Mission.

The contest this year was earmarked as "Chant Geeta, Enchant Krishna" by Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and focused on chapter 15, Purushottama yoga.

Viji Mahadev who has been the main coordinator of this event for several years now, said the competition was a special offering to Pujya Gurudev who spread the message of Bhagavad Geeta for 40 years and conceived the chanting competition so that this message is brought to even small children.

This year's competition was open to all CM members, non-members, and children and adults at the local level. CMLA held the contest on April 25 at Rameshwaram with 140 participants including 30 adults taking part.

The first and second place winners in categories A (ages 4-6 yrs), B (ages 7-9 yrs), C (ages 10-12 yrs), D (13-15yrs) will participate in the national level competition to be held in Chicago on September 5 and 6. Winners from 42 centers in U.S.A are expected to participate. The top four winners from Chicago will participate in the international competition to be held in Chinmaya Vibhooti, Pune on December 22.

The judges this year were Acharya Mahadevanji, Shobha Naimpally, Malini Vasishta, Priya Raghuram, Vidya Venkatesh, Janakiram Kuppa, Pavani Narayanadas, Jayaramanji and Sai Kasibatla. Geetha Senra and Gomathi Ravichandran helped in key aspects of organizing the event. For winners list, click here.

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Satsang with Acharya Mahadevanji at San Gabriel Balavihar

On Ramanavami day, San Gabriel Balavihar had satsang with Acharya Mahadevanji at the home of Preeti and Kaushik. The topic was "Making your heart fit for the Lord to make his home in it." The talk drew from the Sri Ram Charit Manas where Sage Valmiki expounds on the 14 types of abodes Lord Rama can reside in with Mother Sita and Lakshmana.

The talk was combined with melodious chanting of the chaupais and dohas by Acharya Mahadevanji, with accompaniments by Anil Desai on tabla and Gopal Shroff on keyboard, filling the hearts of the listeners.

The talk concluded with the continuous chanting of all relevant verses, and dinner prasad.

TOP

CORP Facilitates More Sessions for Professionals

CORP facilitated two sessions for professionals in CMLA and the broader professional community in the area.

'Get, Set, Go' was a very powerful interactive presentation on getting the tools necessary to better market yourself for that next step in your career or if you are looking for a new job. The interactive presentation talked about how to assertively say your name and how to communicate effectively to stand out in your next interview.

Accounting Cardiograph and Business Valuations were a two part series workshop catered to the entrepreneur in everyone. The first part of the series was conducted on Feb 7 as a lecture-workshop combination; and walked through an understanding on how to interpret the financial statements including the Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet and the Cash statement which are the health indicators for every business. The second part was conducted on Apr 11 and talked about valuation of any small business so that every individual can assess the value of any kind of business and leverage solid financial data to truly becoming that next American entrepreneur.

CORP is committed to bringing many more professional series presentations, lectures and workshops for the professional and is a part of Chinmaya Mission Tustin.

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Please send articles and pictures for publication to Nimmi Raghunathan at nimmicmla@gmail.com

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